

IN THE CLAIMS

Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1.-47. (Cancelled)

48. (Currently Amended) A mass production method for manufacturing successive spherical glass articles, in each of which is accommodated a ~~three-dimensional object or~~ figurine, the method comprising the steps of:

(a) providing a container with a mass of molten glass, the container including at least one discharge opening through which liquid glass can be delivered;

(b) providing a plurality of pre-heated thermally resistant figurines; and

(c) repeating the following steps ~~(d)-(j)~~ (d)-(i) for successively enclosing a figurine in glass;

(d) ~~dividing~~ cutting a portion from liquid glass delivered via said at least one discharge opening ~~into successive first portions~~;

(e) guiding the ~~first portions~~ portion into a first mold part having a substantially hemispherical bottom;

(f) ~~positioning at least one figurine~~ one of said figurines ~~on or~~ at least partially in the first portion of glass guided into the first mold part;

~~(g) dividing liquid glass delivered via at least one discharge opening into successive second portions;~~

~~[[~~(h)~~]] (g) guiding the second portions into a second mold part positioned adjacent the first mold part pressing the glass mass formed by at least said portion of glass~~

with said figurine in said first mold part and a second mold part positioned on top of the first mold part having a substantially hemispherical cover and an opening therein, thereby forming a glass mass with the at least one figurine enclosed therein;

[[~~(i)~~]] (h) removing the formed glass mass with the figurine enclosed therein from the first and second mold parts; and

[[~~(i)~~]] (i) modeling the mass with the figurine enclosed therein to a spherical form by omnidirectional rolling for a time, together with simultaneous cooling, such that the mass solidifies and forms ~~[[the]]~~ a spherical article.

49. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein ~~the figurines are preheated~~ step (i) further comprises during said omnidirectional rolling, heating the spherical form such that precise modeling is facilitated prior to said cooling of the spherical form.

50. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, further comprising the steps of:

~~providing the first mold with part as a substantially hemispherical bottom, and the second mold part as a substantially hemispherical cover for placing on and removing therefrom;~~

~~pouring the first portion of glass onto the bottom;~~

~~placing the cover thereon and pressing the enclosed portion of glass; and~~

~~removing the cover~~

dividing liquid glass delivered via said at least one discharge opening into

successive second portions; and

guiding the second portions into the second mold part positioned on top of the first mold part between steps (f) and (g).

51.-53. (Cancelled)

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, wherein cooling of the spherical article takes place by progressing the article through a temperature path from an annealing temperature to a strain temperature, such that cooling occurs in a substantially stress-free manner.

55. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 54, further comprising the steps of:

additionally annealing the article by fully heating the form to remove internal stresses; and

subsequently and slowly cooling the article.

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 55, wherein the article is slowly cooled to about 50°C.

57.-58. (Cancelled)

59. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 48, wherein the modeling step ~~[[h]]~~ (i) is performed by a first roller having a recessed helical groove with a smooth, round form, wherein the roller is rotatable at a first peripheral speed and co-acts with a second roller rotatable at a second peripheral speed differing from the first peripheral speed, wherein the second roller is smooth, provided with a helical groove, or any combination thereof.

60. (Cancelled)

61. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 48, further comprising providing a plurality of first and second mold sets for successively holding successive glass portions therein.

62. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 61, wherein steps ~~(d)-(h)~~ (d)-(g) are repeated for the plurality of mold sets prior to step ~~[[h]]~~ (i).

63.-71. (Cancelled)